

Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-06 ISO-00 SCCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-07 IO-10 /091 W

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R 180845Z DEC 74

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3034

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0969

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ET

SUBJECT: ERITREAN DEVELOPMENTS

REF A. KHARTOUM 2779; B. JIDDA 7374; C. FBIS LONDON 161629Z (NOTAL;
D. ADDIS ABABA 14487 (NOTAL)

1. FOLLOWING PARA BASED ON CONVERSATION WITH ERITREAN BUSINESSMAN,
WHO IS USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE. SOURCE BELIEVES PRESENT EFFORTS
AT NEGOTIATION WILL FAIL UNLESS DIRG IS WILLING TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT
CONCESSIONS. HE SAYS DELEGATION IN KHARTOUM, HEADED BY MININFO
MIDAEI IMRU, INCLUDES ERITREAN CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR AMANUEL
AMDEMICAIE, MININTERIOR, MINCOMMERCE AND DEVELOPMENT, AND FOUR
DIRG REPS. HE SPECULATED THAT MAJ. MENGHISTU HAILE MARIAM WAS IN
GROUP, BUT DOUBTED THAT HE COULD SAFELY LEAVE ADDIS ABABA. HE SAID
THAT ELF/PLF OFFERED TO LET THE ERITREAN PEOPLE DECIDE THE FUTURE
OF ERITREA BY REFERENDUM. THIS LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE IS SUPPORTED
BY THE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE JOINING THEIR RANKS. DOCTORS, NURSES,
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PHARMACISTS, LAWYERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS HAVE LEFT ASMARA,

SINCE THE DEATH OF GEN. AMAN, TO JOIN THE INSURGENTS. SOURCE STATED THAT DR. BEREKET AB HABTE SELASSIE (ADDIS ABABA 12960), JOINED THE PLF IN A CAMP NEAR ASMARA.

2. COMMENT: MORE AND MORE KEY ERITREANS ARE SETTING ASIDE RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE AND MAKING THE PERSONAL SACRIFICES TO PREPARE FOR ARMED CONFLIT, IF NECESSARY, TO DEFEND THE ERITREAN PEOPLE. WITH ARAB SUPPORT FOR THE ELF/PLF INCREASING, AND INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE DIRG DECREASING, IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE ERITREA GAINS SOME FORM OF AUTONOMY OR INDEPENDENCE. IF THE DIRG REFUSES TO GRANT AUTONOMY ALONG LINES ACCEPTABLE TO ELF/PLF, THEN ERITREA WILL LIKELY

BECOME INDEPENDENT IN THE ENSUING MILITARY CONFLICT. GEN GOITOM GHBREZGHI, ERITREAN POLICE COMMISSIONER, VISITED ADDIS ABABA DURING WEEK OF 8 DEC. TO ARGUE FOR NEGOTIATED ERITREAN SETTLEMENT. IF A SETTLEMENT CANNOT BE NEGOTIATED, DUE TO DIRG INTRANSIGENCE,

HIS LOYALTY AND THAT OF THE COMMANDO POLICE COULD SHIFT. IF A MEANINGFUL FEDERATION IS OFFERED BY THE DIRG, IT COULD GAIN ARAB SUPPORT AND AVOID THE FORMATION OF AN ERITREAN STATE. ERITREA WOULD NOT BE ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE WITHOUT MAJOR CAPITAL INPUTS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF MINERAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES.
PERRY

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